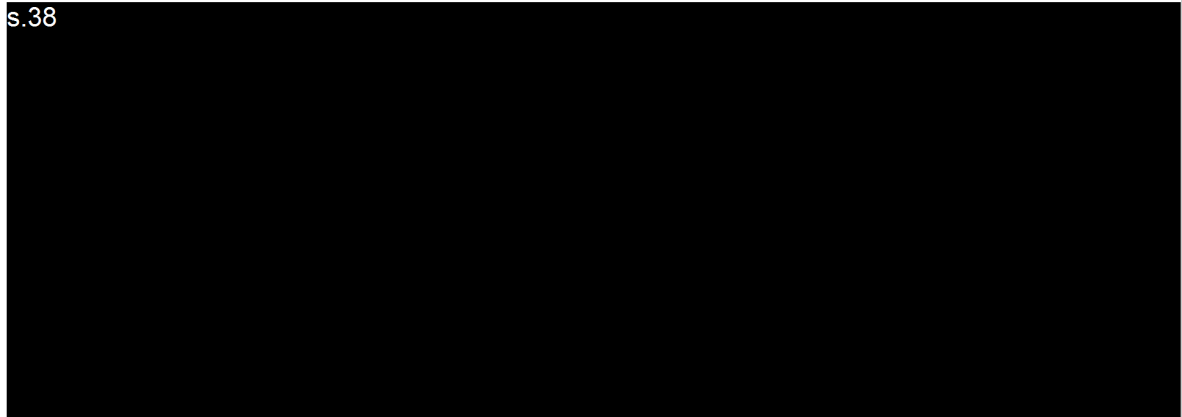


**OFFICE OF THE MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE
MEDIA BRIEFING NOTE
FEBRUARY 23, 2022**

TO: Hon. Anita Anand, Minister of National Defence
FROM: Daniel Minden, Press Secretary
CC: Sabrina Kim, Director of Communications and Issues Management
SUBJECT: Interviews Regarding s.38 Expansion

QUICK FACTS:

s.38



NUMBERS:

- Up to 260 personnel on HMCS Halifax in the Euro-Atlantic area
- Up to 40 personnel to staff the CP-140 Aurora Maritime Patrol Aircraft in Euro-Atlantic
- Up to 130 personnel in the artillery battery in Latvia
- Up to 25 personnel for the electronic warfare troop in Latvia
- Up to 5 staff officers in Latvia

REACTION TO PUTIN'S ANNOUNCEMENT:

- We strongly condemn President Putin's recognition of Donetsk and Luhansk as so-called "independent territories," and his decision to send troops across the border.
- This constitutes a clear violation of the Minsk agreements, and the UN Charter.
- Let us be clear: the invasion has begun. Our response began yesterday and should Russia escalate, so will the costs imposed by Canada and its allies.

SANCTIONS AGAINST RUSSIA:

- Yesterday we announced that Canada will be imposing new sanctions, which will:
- Impose restrictions on members of the Russian State Duma who voted for the decision to recognize the independence of the Donetsk and Luhansk;
- Impose a dealings ban on the areas of Donetsk and Luhansk, which will effectively prohibit Canadians from engaging in transactions and activities in these regions;
- Place new prohibitions on direct and indirect dealings in Russian sovereign debt; and
- Impose sanctions on two significant Russian financial institutions – VEB and the Military Bank – to hinder Russia's ability to further fund its aggressive actions.
- *If pressed on future sanctions:* Our response began yesterday and should Russia escalate, so will the costs imposed by Canada and its allies.

LETHAL WEAPONS

- Last week, we announced that Canada would provide \$7.8 million in lethal weapons to assist Ukraine. Yesterday, our RCAF made another delivery to Ukraine, and this support has now been delivered in full.
- This includes rifles, machine guns, surveillance equipment, and 1.5 million rounds of ammunition.
- This was requested & welcomed by: Ukrainian Defence Minister Reznikov who stated that “Real friends are known by deeds, and Canada is one of them”
- This is in addition to the broad suite of measures we’re providing to support Ukraine, including:
 - The training of over 33,000 Ukrainian soldiers through Op UNIFIER since 2015;
 - Extension & expansion of Op UNIFIER, which includes:
 - Further non-lethal aid; s.38
 - Significant financial support – including \$620M of loans to support economic resilience & democratic reform in Ukraine

DEFENCE MINISTERS MEETING & MSC

- Last week, I was at the NATO Defence Ministers’ Meeting in Brussels where I met with my counterparts in the U.S. – Secretary Lloyd Austin & UK – Ben Wallace.
- I also attended the Munich Security Conference where I met with Minister Reznikov and with whom I continue to be in close contact.
- NATO is being tested. But to Putin’s dismay, NATO is more united than ever before.

EVACUATION OF OPERATION UNIFIER PERSONNEL

- The safety & security of our Canadian Armed Forces is my top priority.
- Based on the information that we have, the facts on the ground regarding Russia’s escalating aggression and in line with our allies – Canada’s military training mission in Ukraine has temporarily been paused.
- Most CAF personnel have been temporarily relocated to elsewhere in Europe.
- This is in line with what our allies have done & does not signal the end of our training mission in Ukraine.

OPERATION UNIFIER

- Since 2015, our Canadian Armed Forces have trained over 33,000 Ukrainian soldiers through op UNIFIER – Canada’s military training mission in Ukraine;
 - This includes 600+ training courses, including in:
 - Sniping, military policing, medical training, explosive device disposal & reconnaissance.
- Civilian and military personnel from the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces have also been supporting key elements of Ukraine’s defence reform process, such as democratic accountability and civilian oversight of defence and security institutions.
- We also recently announced support to Ukraine to help them combat s.38 s.38 s.38.

NON-LETHAL EQUIPMENT

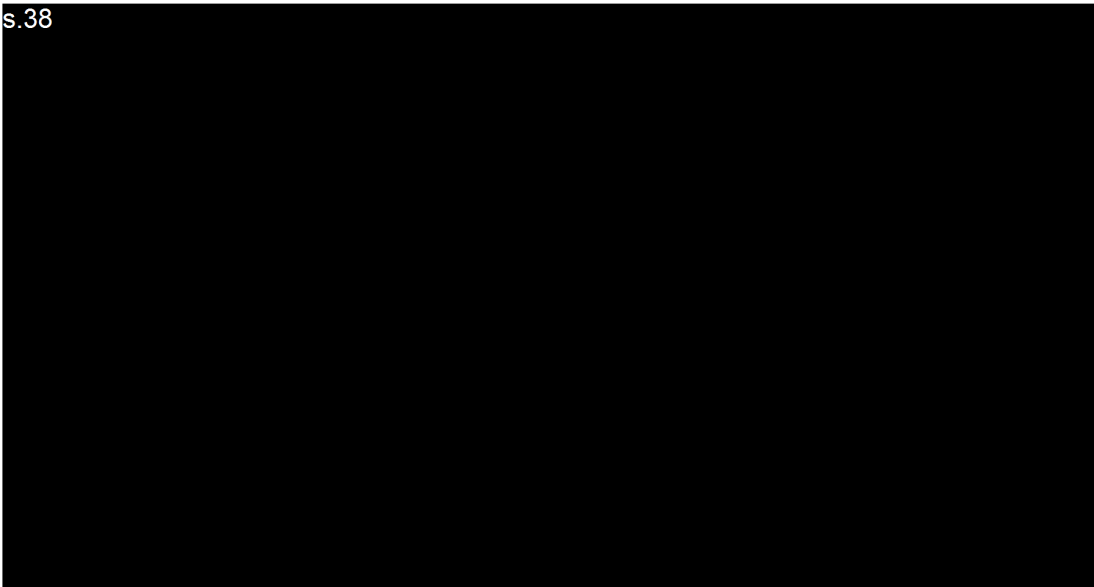
- Over the past years, Canada has provided s.38 a mobile field hospital, explosive disposal equipment, medical kits used for military field operations, and night vision goggles.
- Canada recently announced and delivered additional non-lethal aid, including body armour and load carriage kits, laser rangefinders, metal detectors, and spotting scopes.

s.38



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. s.38



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2. What is your reaction to President Putin's decision to recognize so-called "independent states" in Ukraine?

- We strongly condemn President Putin's recognition of the non-government controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk in Ukraine as independent territories and his decision to send troops across the border.
- This constitutes a clear violation of the Minsk agreements, the UN Charter, and the international rules-based order that has protected global security for decades.
- Russia's actions represent a direct threat to the peace and security of Ukraine, and the world.
- In coordination with our allies we have announced our initial sanctions package targeting those responsible for this illegal decision and Russian banks. There is still time for Russia to choose de-escalation and diplomacy, but the window to do so is closing.

3. What sanctions has Canada announced in response?

- Yesterday we announced that Canada will be imposing new sanctions, which will:
- Impose restrictions on members of the Russian State Duma who voted for the decision to recognize the independence of the Donetsk and Luhansk;
- Impose a dealings ban on the areas of Donetsk and Luhansk, which will effectively prohibit Canadians from engaging in transactions and activities in these regions;
- Place new prohibitions on direct and indirect dealings in Russian sovereign debt; and
- Impose sanctions on two significant Russian financial institutions – VEB and the Military Bank – to hinder Russia's ability to further fund its aggressive actions.

4. Will you impose more sanctions on Ukraine?

- Our response began yesterday and should Russia escalate, so will the costs imposed by Canada and its allies.
- These measures are just the beginning.
- Should Russia further invade Ukraine, it will be met with severe coordinated economic sanctions and increasing pressure if they refuse to change course.
- Canada's response is ready – we are prepared to target even more of Russia's financial sector and oligarchs, and we are ready to make a significant announcement related to Canadian exports to Russia. There is still time for Russia to choose de-escalation and diplomacy, but the window to do so is closing.

5. What is your reaction to President Putin's speech on Monday, which effectively denied Ukraine's right to exist?

- We are alarmed by the rhetoric used by President Putin and his revisionist understanding of Ukraine's history and reality
- Ukraine is a sovereign country and President Putin has no right to deny its right to exist.

6. Has Canada meaningfully contributed to diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis?

- For months, Canada, our allies, and our partners have worked tirelessly to convince Russia to join us in addressing its concerns peacefully.
- Minister Joly has been in close contact with her American, British, and European counterparts, as well as those leading NATO and the OSCE.
- We will continue our tireless efforts to achieve a peaceful outcome to this crisis for the people of Ukraine.
- Russia is responsible for this crisis - one they have fabricated, through disinformation and manipulation.

7. What is your reaction to Germany's decision to freeze the Nord Stream 2 gas project?

- We welcome Germany's decision to halt the Nord Stream 2 project in response to Russia's aggressive actions which continue to jeopardize peace and security in Europe.
- Canada, with its partners and allies, will react firmly to their blatant disregard for international law and are preparing to impose economic sanctions for these actions.
- *If pressed on European energy security:*
- The current situation in Ukraine underscores the importance of energy security of our allies in Europe and across the world. We are looking at long-term opportunities to enhance energy exports to new markets and to our allies in Europe and across the world. The Canada-Germany memorandum of understanding (MOU) is one example of how Canada tends to do so. Our government is directly engaged with our American and European counterparts, and we are steadfast in our support for Ukraine and our NATO allies.

8. Ukraine has declared a nationwide state of emergency. What is your reaction?

- Our top priority is the safety and security of Canadians. Canadians in Ukraine should leave while commercial means are available.
- To the Ukrainian-Canadian community who worry about their relatives: we are with you.
- Minister Joly has spoken to her counterparts in Poland, Romania, Hungary, Moldova and Slovakia to ensure Canadians' safe passage through their borders. Canadian travellers should register with the Registration of Canadians Abroad service to get the latest updates on the situation.

9. Do any Canadian Armed Forces personnel remain in Ukraine under Operation UNIFIER? If not, where have you moved them to?

- As a result of Russia's unwarranted aggression against Ukraine, Canadian Armed Forces are temporarily relocating components of Joint Task Force – Ukraine (JTF-U) to elsewhere in Europe.
- I am not able to divulge their exact location, but I assure all Canadians that they are out of harm's way.
- This temporary repositioning of JTF-U personnel is to assure the security of our troops, and it does not signal the end of our training mission.

10. Do you have special forces on the ground in Ukraine right now? Will they help evacuate diplomatic personnel and/or Canadians?

- For operational security reasons, I will not divulge the location of Canadian Special Forces, but it is routine for our Canadian Forces to assist Canadian embassies around the world with security where required.

11. What are the risks of an invasion of the Baltics, given that other former Soviet territories like Ukraine are being menaced? Could Russia invade from Belarus?

- Our commitment to the security of our NATO allies, including the Baltic states, is unwavering.
- s.38 [REDACTED] Canada has been active on land, air, and sea to promote stability and security in Central and Eastern Europe. Three weeks ago, I visited Camp Adazi in Latvia and met with our troops deployed there.
- Canada is leading the multi-national Enhanced Forward Presence Battle Group in Latvia and has participated in the NATO enhanced Air Policing mission in Romania on a rotational basis.

- Canada also recently handed over command of the NATO Standing Maritime Group 1 to our Dutch allies, and we constantly have a frigate deployed to the region under a NATO flag – currently HMCS Montreal.
- Canada will consistently support NATO operations to deter against any aggressive actions in the region.
- Canada will continue to work with our partners and allies to uphold peace, security, and the rules-based international order.

12. Has Operation UNIFIER made enough of a difference for Ukrainian forces to have a fighting chance against Russia, in the event of a full-blown further invasion?

- In 2015, Canada launched Operation UNIFIER in response to requests from the Government of Ukraine, to help Ukraine remain sovereign, secure, and stable.
- Canada has trained over 33,000 Security Forces of Ukraine (SFU), and almost 2,000 members of the National Guard of Ukraine (NGU).
- This training unit and brigade level tactical training, combat engineer training such as improvised explosive device disposal and explosive ordnance disposal; sniping; reconnaissance; military policing; development of a non-commissioned officer corps; and medical training – and it has made a real difference in modernizing and professionalizing Ukraine’s military.

13. Would you send troops to fight to defend Ukraine?

- Canada will continue to provide a wide range of support to Ukraine as Ukrainian forces work to defend their country’s sovereignty and territorial integrity.
- Canada has trained over 33,000 Ukrainian forces under Operation UNIFIER, we have provided significant financial support, lethal and non-lethal military aid, and as NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg recently said, “Canada is one of the lead countries in NATO when it comes to providing support for Ukraine,” and that “there are not many other countries at the equal level of efforts, doing as much as Canada.”
- We’re working with NATO allies to support Ukraine in a variety of ways.

14. What military or cyber support is Canada providing to Ukraine at the current time despite the withdrawal of Op UNIFIER personnel?

- As we announced a few weeks ago, s.38 is authorized to assist the CAF in support of government-authorized military missions, such as Operation UNIFIER.
- s.38 and we are providing this support to Ukraine.
- This increased support is helping Ukraine strengthen its security and ability to defend itself against a range of threats.

15. President Biden said that he is “convinced” that President Putin has decided to further invade Ukraine. Do you agree?

- Deeply concerned by ongoing Russian aggression in and around Ukraine.
- Russia has a choice.
- We hope they will choose to de-escalate, show transparency in its military activities, engage in meaningful dialogue.
- The door remains open for a diplomatic solution, but it is quickly closing.
- However, the facts on the ground are:
 - The buildup of well over 130,000 troops at the Ukrainian border;
 - Air exercises in Belarus;
 - Naval activity in the Black Sea.

- Facts point to a significant escalation, and that's what we saw this week.
- As a result, we remain prepared for any eventuality.

16. The U.S. has accused Russia of 'false flag' operations in Ukraine. Do you expect further Russian attempts to destabilize Ukraine?

- Russia has long attempted to destabilize Ukraine through a range of hybrid efforts.
- We are aware of multiple reports of efforts to recruit Ukrainian government officials, increased military support for separatist groups in Ukraine's east, and long running disinformation campaigns aimed at destabilizing the country and creating an environment of fear and uncertainty.
- Most recently, we have seen reports of potential false flag operations.
- We are monitoring the situation and will continue to work closely with our allies to coordinate our responses to deter further Russian aggression.

17. What is your reaction to the shelling of a kindergarten in Donbas?

- We firmly condemn these unprovoked dangerous acts by Russian-backed actors. We know that Russia is looking for a pretext for military action, and we urge them instead to de-escalate and respect Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

18. What is your reaction to malicious cyber activities targeting Ukraine, which the United States National Security Council attributed to Russia?

- We condemn the recent malicious cyber activity targeting Ukraine.
- We continue to strongly oppose the use of cyberspace for reckless and destructive activities.
- s.38 to assist the CAF in support of government-authorized military missions, such as Operation UNIFIER.
- This support includes s.38
- While we can't speak about specific operations, we can confirm that s.38 s.38 with our partners in Ukraine.
- This increased support will help Ukraine strengthen its security and ability to defend itself against a range of threats.
- When I met with Minister Reznikov over the weekend in Munich, he thanked Canada for the support that we're providing, including on this issue.

19. Will you meet with your Russian counterpart?

- Russia knows exactly what Canada's position is: Russia can negotiate meaningfully towards a diplomatic solution, or it will face severe economic sanctions coordinated by Canada and its allies.
- On this matter, we will continue to play our role in the ongoing dialogue with Russia through our multilateral partners, namely NATO and the OSCE and will engage bilaterally with our allies to coordinate deterrence efforts.

20. Does Canada support NATO membership for Ukraine?

- Canada fully supports NATO's Open Door Policy, and welcomes Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic aspirations.
- Ukraine's current Enhanced Opportunities Partner (EOP) status is an important recognition by NATO of the progress that Ukraine has made, and of Ukraine's significant and valued contributions to NATO operations and exercises.
- Canada remains unwavering in its support for Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, and the people of Ukraine.

- Since Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, Canada has imposed sanctions on more than 440 individuals and entities, many in coordination with allies.
- Any military incursion into Ukraine will have serious consequences, including coordinated sanctions.

21. Are you confident in the energy security of Europe if Russia escalates and your European allies impose sanctions on Russia?

- The current situation in Ukraine underscores the importance of energy security of our allies in Europe and across the world.
- We are looking at long-term opportunities to enhance energy exports to new markets and to our allies in Europe and across the world. Last year, Canada and Germany signed an agreement on green energy innovation and trade – and this is just one example of our government's work on this file.
- Our government is directly engaged with our American and European counterparts, and we are steadfast in our support for Ukraine and our NATO allies.

22. Secretary General Stoltenberg discussed the potential for new NATO battle groups in Eastern Europe, similar to the ones it has established in the Baltics and Poland. Does Canada support this idea, and would it contribute?

- Canada will continue to support NATO's deterrence efforts in Europe, as we work to protect the territorial integrity of our Baltic allies and defend the rules-based international order.
- In Latvia, s.38, Canada leads one of NATO's four enhanced Forward Presence Battle Groups with well over 500 troops on the ground – making this Canada's largest foreign military deployment, and we are expanding it.

23. Why did Canada withdraw its troops from Ukraine? Are there any left?

- Op UNIFIER is a training and capacity building mission to support the Ukrainian people.
- The safety and security of Canadian Armed Forces members is my top priority, and we will always work to keep them safe.
- As a result of Russia's unwarranted aggression against Ukraine, Canadian Armed Forces are temporarily relocating components of Joint Task Force – Ukraine (JTF-U) to elsewhere in Europe.
- This temporary repositioning of JTF-U personnel is to assure the security of our troops, and it does not signal the end of our training mission.
- We remain committed to supporting the people, and Security Forces, of Ukraine
- *If pressed on whether the additional 60 trainers ever arrived, or on remaining Canadian troops in Ukraine:* For operational security reasons, we will provide further details on numbers, locations, or future intentions.

24. Is there any future for Operation UNIFIER? Is this “relocation” really temporary?

- This is indeed a temporary relocation of our troops to elsewhere in Europe, and this does not signal the end of our mission in support of Ukraine.

25. Last weekend, the United States announced an additional 3,000 troops to be deployed to Poland. Is Canada considering boosting its presence on NATO's eastern flank?

- Two weeks ago, in Latvia, I met with Canadian Armed Forces members serving on s.38 in support of NATO assurance and deterrence measures.

- At any time, there can be up to 915 CAF members deployed on s.38 making it Canada's largest current international military operation.
- We are considering options to bolster our presence in Eastern Europe.

26. Compared to our NATO allies, has Canada done enough to support Ukraine?

- During my conversation with Defence Minister Reznikov, the Minister thanked Canada for our significant contributions to Ukraine's security. In fact, Operation UNIFIER has trained approximately 33,000 members of Ukraine's security forces, including almost 2,000 members of Ukraine's national guard.
- President Zelensky and Minister Reznikov have expressed sincere thanks to Canada for this announcement.
- NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg also remarked that, "Canada is one of the lead countries in NATO when it comes to providing support for Ukraine," and that "there are not many other countries at the equal level of efforts, doing as much as Canada."
- Our aid has been developed through close collaboration with our partners and allies. Military training and capacity building are Canadian military strengths, and we have been uniquely positioned to provide this important support to our Ukrainian partners.
- We've announced further aid to support Ukraine's sovereignty and security, including financial assistance and the provision of lethal weapons.
- Canada's support for Ukraine's sovereignty, security, and territorial integrity is steadfast and unwavering, and we will continue to stand by Ukraine.

27. Are you confident that lethal arms won't end up in the wrong hands?

- Since 2015, Canada has developed excellent integration with the Security Forces of Ukraine. We have trained well over 33,000 members of the SFU and over 2,000 members of Ukraine's national guard.
- The professional training that Canada has provided will assist these forces in the use of these weapons.
- *If pressed on the Azov Battallion:* We strongly oppose all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, intolerance and extremism. We are not – nor will we - be providing support to Azov and affiliated entities. We continue to vehemently oppose any and all racist, discriminatory and hateful views and the groups that promote them.

28. The CSE released updated cyber advice for Canadian organizations. Is there an elevated cyber risk to Canadians because of the situation in Europe?

- In light of rapidly evolving cyber risks, specifically known Russian-backed cyber threats, the Communications Security Establishment (CSE) recently provided advice to critical Canadian organizations so that they can defend Canadian networks and deter cyber threats before they reach our systems.
- Canadians can rest assured that our country is well-positioned to respond – and is taking the steps needed – to defend our national cybersecurity interests, in line with the steps that our Five Eyes partners are taking.
- We will continue to do whatever it takes to protect Canada and our critical infrastructure.

29. Will Canada s.38 with Ukraine?

- This particular issue has not been prioritized by Ukraine during our discussions.
- The package we announced in support of Ukraine includes measures to support s.38 This increased support will help Ukraine strengthen its security and ability to defend itself against a range of threats.

- We will continue to discuss a range of options with our Ukrainian counterparts and our NATO allies, who are also providing Ukraine with a variety of resources.

30. What is your advice to Canadians currently in Ukraine?

- Since February 1, we have been urging Canadians to avoid all travel to Ukraine because of the ongoing Russian threats and the risk of armed conflict.
- On February 11, Minister Joly advised all Canadians in Ukraine to leave the country now, while commercial means are available.
- Our diplomatic and consular staff remain on the ground and stand ready to provide consular assistance to Canadian citizens as required. However, our ability to do so could become severely limited.
- We strongly urge all Canadians in Ukraine to sign up with the Registration of Canadians Abroad service, and to contact sos@international.gc.ca if they are in need of emergency consular assistance.

31. Are you concerned about the multiple CAF members alleged to have been involved in the convoys and blockades?

- Out of our force of 70,000 members, we're now aware of approximately ten cases in which CAF members are alleged to have publicly supported the illegal blockades.
- Throughout COVID-19, the Canadian Armed Forces have been there for Canadians. Over ninety-eight percent of Canadian Armed Forces members have attested to being fully vaccinated. They represent the overwhelming majority of our military, and we thank each of them for rolling up their sleeves to protect themselves and their fellow citizens.
- The discipline and good conduct of our Canadian Armed Forces is of the utmost importance, so that all Canadians can have faith in this institution.
- All members of the CAF must adhere to the Queen's Regulations and Orders, including those that pertain to the public expression of political opinions.
- I expect that any CAF member whose conduct brings discredit to the Forces will be held accountable by their Chain of Command.